



Observed temperature

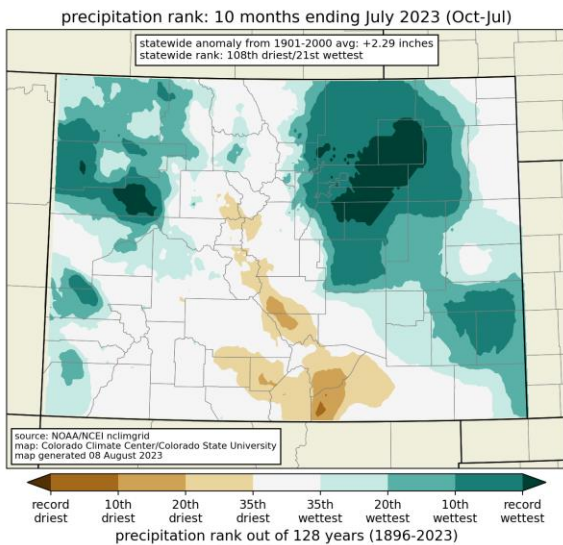
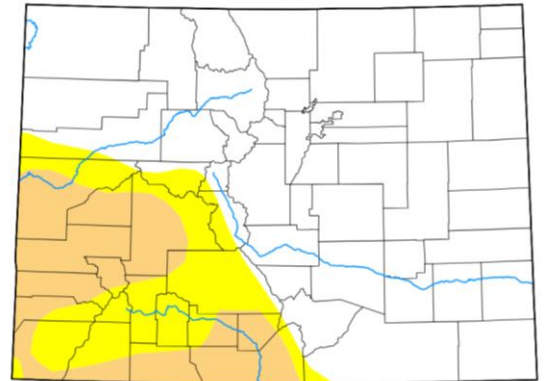
July 2023 was defined by sharp contrasts across eastern and western Colorado for both temperature and precipitation. Although the first 10 months (October - July) of the water year to date is tied for the 47th coolest in the 128-year record, July was particularly warm across the state. This is the state's coolest first 10 months of the water year since 2010. However, temperatures in July 2023 were higher than average and ranked 21st warmest. Temperatures moving into the first couple weeks in August were up to three degrees Fahrenheit (°F) above average in the San Luis Valley, while parts of northeastern Colorado experienced temperatures up to 5°F below average.

Observed precipitation and drought conditions

The first ten months of the water year are tied for the 21st wettest in the 128-year record. However, the distribution of precipitation has not been evenly disbursed throughout the state. The eastern side of the state and the northwest quadrant of the state have been the major beneficiaries of precipitation this water year. Notably, Elbert County up through Arapahoe, Adams, and Morgan counties have experienced record wet conditions, while the San Luis Valley and parts of southwestern Colorado have experienced drier than normal conditions. In fact, most of southwestern Colorado experienced a top-ten driest July on record, with areas even experiencing record dry conditions for the month of July.

U.S. Drought Monitor
Colorado

August 15, 2023
(Released Thursday, Aug. 17, 2023)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



Statewide, July 2023 precipitation was below the 20th century average. This is largely due to the extremely dry conditions in the southwest region. These conditions are sharply contrasted by the very wet conditions in eastern Colorado. A large portion of northeastern Colorado saw the wettest three-month period on record (May-June-July 2023) contributing to the overall cool and wet trend in 2023, even as the dry conditions in southwestern Colorado have made for a warm and dry July.

Seasonal outlook

El Niño conditions have arrived in Colorado and are highly likely to persist into fall and winter (> 95% chance). El Niño conditions typically indicate wetter than normal conditions across much of the state. While NOAA's seasonal outlook through the fall season remains uncertain about the chance for above average precipitation, the short-term forecast indicates a greater chance of higher than normal precipitation over the next few weeks, which could alleviate the slow start to the monsoon season. Temperatures in the coming weeks and into the fall season will likely be higher than normal.

Climate conditions and water implications

July 2023 was the hottest month in the global temperature record since the 1880s, and calendar year 2023 has the potential to be the hottest year on record around the globe. Although Colorado has experienced cooler temperatures this year, these recent conditions are an exception to projected climate conditions. Whereas the projections for precipitation are less certain and more variable, average temperatures across the state have increased and are projected to increase in the future. This has implications for Colorado's water supply, including but not limited to higher evaporative demand, lower soil moisture, and earlier runoff timing. Water availability will likely be stressed under these conditions now and in the future.

Next Water Availability Task Force Meeting: September 19, 2023 9:30am

Co-Chairs: Kathryn Weismiller, CWCB, Tracy Kosloff, DWR, and Emily Adrid, CWCB

Additional info at cwcb.colorado.gov/water-availability-flood-task-forces

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